

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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43

ACTION SS-25

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R 311213Z DEC 75
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8909
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 13164

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, EG, IS
SUBJECT: OIL EXPLORATION IN GULF OF SUEZ

REF: (A) STATE 302006, (B) TEL AVIV 875

1. AMBASSADOR HAS DISCUSSED PROPOSAL CONTAINED REFTTEL, FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF INFORMAL NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE ON MOVEMENTS IN GULF OF SUEZ OF EXPLORATION VESSELS OPERATED BY AND FOR US OIL COMPANIES, WITH VP CAMPBELL OF AMOCO. STRESS WAS PLACED ON FACT THAT US WOULD NOT BE ASKING FOR PERMISSION FOR COMPANY OR ON BEHALF OF GOE, BUT WOULD MERELY INFORM GOI IN INTEREST OF INSURING SAFETY OF AMERICAN CITIZENS AND VESSELS. AMBASSADOR ALSO POINTED OUT THAT USG LEGAL POSITION IS UNCHANGED AND THAT, WHILE WE RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO PATROL SINAI TERRITORIAL WATERS IN ORDER TO PROTECT COASTAL OCCUPATION, IT MAY NOT INTERFERE WITH EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES BY US COMPANIES IN EGYPTIAN CONCESSION AREAS.

2. CRAIG SAID AMOCO WOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY IN FORMALIZING ITS PRACTICE OF KEEPING EMBASSY INFORMED OF VESSEL MOVEMENTS, AS HAS OFTEN BEEN DONE IN PAST, BEARING IN MIND THAT FOR SEISMIC WORK ONLY GENERAL AREAS CAN BE CITED AND NOT SPECIFIC LOCATIONS AS IN CASE OF DRILL SHIPS. HE AGREED THAT GOE WOULD PROBABLY NOT APPROVE OF US INFORMALLY PASSING WORD TO ISRAELIS, FOR REASONS OF SOVEREIGNTY, BUT THOUGH THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE UTILITY IN TAKING PRECAUTIONS TO AVOID AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT.

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IT WAS AGREED THAT AMOCO WILL ADVISE US IN ADVANCE OF SIGNIFICANT

FUTURE MOVES IN SUEZ GULF. FYI: NONE ARE SCHEDULED IN NEAR FUTURE, E.G., IN NEXT FEW WEEKS. END FYI.

3. CRAIG POINTED OUT IN PASSING THAT ISRAELIS HAVE BEHAVED SOMEWHAT CAPRICIOUSLY IN PAST, SINCE THERE HAS BEEN NO TROUBLE IN AREAS OF MORGAN AND RAMADAN FIELDS, WHICH ARE LARGELY ON EASTERN SIDE OF "MEDIAN LINE" (WHICH AMOCO DOES NOT RECOGNIZE, ALTHOUGH IT IS DRAWN ON THEIR CONCESSION MAPS FOR INFO PURPOSES), WHILE MAJORITY OF RECENT INCIDENTS - ACCORDING TO COMPANY - HAVE TAKEN PLACE ON WESTERN SIDE.

4. WE HAVE NOT INFORMED GOE OF OUR PLANS TO PASS INFORMAL ADVANCE NOTICE TO ISRAELIS, AS SUGGESTED PARA 2 REFTTEL, SINCE WE ARE RELATIVELY CERTAIN THERE WOULD BE OBJECTION. FOR SAME REASON, WE HAVE NOT SUGGESTED USE OF JOINT COMMISSION PROCEDURE FOR THIS PURPOSE.

5. WHILE PROCEDURE WE ARE CONTEMPLATING IS IN BEST INTERESTS OF ALL PARTIES, CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN TO INSURE THAT GOI DOES NOT INTERPRET IT AS ACQUIESCENCE IN FORMAL NOTIFICATION EACH TIME SHIP PLANS TO CROSS INTO ISRAELI CONTROLLED WATERS THAT HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED (TEL AVIV 875). IN EVENT SYSTEM IS ESTABLISHED, US SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR IN EVERY POSSIBLE WAY THAT INFORMATION IS BEING PASSED INFORMALLY ONLY, AND THAT NO REPLY OR GRATING OF PERMISSION IS DESIRED OR NECESSARY.

6. WE SHOULD ALSO BEAR IN MIND POSSIBILITY THAT ISRAELIS MAY LEAK INFO ON THIS PROCEDURE TO PRESS FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES, WHICH WOULD CAUSE SOME EMBARRASSMENT HERE. EILTS

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